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CRITICIZES PRESENT SYSTEM OF REPAIRING RAILROAD CARS IN USSR

More than half the freight cars in use in the Soviet Union are four-axle cars. The production of two-axle cars has ceased; those still in operation are removed from inventory as they become worn out.

The cars built now are equipped with cast steel trucks. More than 70 percent of the rolling stock is equipped with automatic brakes, and about 60 percent with automatic couplers.

The repair of cars by the progressive method is not carried out extensively, and the system for determining when cars should be repaired has not been changed.

The period of time between repairs, rather than the condition of the car or the distance traveled, determines when a car is to be repaired. For example, two cars which have been repaired at the same time will again be repaired together, even though one car was in service and the other idle during most of the period.

In making annual repairs on four-axle freight cars and two-axle tank cars, parts of the running gear are removed and then reassembled. This results only in unnecessary changing of bearings, an excessive use of babbitt, and a loss of time and labor.

Under present regulations, cars undergo current, annual, medium, or capital repairs. There is no clear-cut distinction between these categories. Capital repairs carried out at a car yard are quite similar to medium repairs. In both types, the work involved in repairing the running gear, draft gear, and brake equipment is very much the same. There is a difference in repairing a roof and in painting a box car; in capital repairs, the sheet metal on the roof is replaced and the car is painted twice regardless of its condition.

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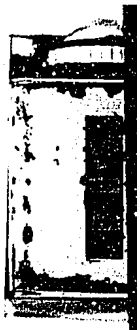

The difference in labor costs for medium and capital repairs made at car yards is not too great. For instance, the labor costs for capital repairs made on a four-axle box car are, on an average, 253 rubles 30 kopecks, as compared to 231 rubles 42 kopecks for medium repairs.

The amount of work to be performed on a car is determined by the cost of material. For example, in 1952 the Buzuluk Car Repair Yard on the Orenburg Railway System averaged the following expenditures for materials:

	Capital Repairs	Medium Repairs
Four-axle box car	3,623 rubles	2,960 rubles
Two-axle box car	2,023 "	1,343 "
Four-axle flat car	1,476 "	1,125 "
Two-axle flat car	1,592 "	1,118 "

The majority of car yards do not have separate shops for making capital and medium repairs. The quality of repairs depends on the qualifications of the working force. It is almost impossible to determine whether the car has undergone capital or medium repairs.

The present system of repairing cars at car yards requires a critical analysis. Several suggestions have been made. First, it has been suggested that capital repairs be made only in car repair plants, where the facilities for making these repairs are much greater than at the car yards. Second, it has been suggested that the car repair yards perform only current repairs, and that minor defects be corrected at the car yards when the cars are uncoupled, or at the car inspection points when the cars are still coupled together. This will make it possible to prolong the time between periodic repairs.

It is further suggested that freight cars be divided into five groups, in accordance with construction, frame, and amount of service. The first group would include all two-axle and four-axle cars having center sills. and four-axle cars with cast trucks, but would not include wooden refrigerator cars or cars which have seen little service. The period of service between capital repairs for cars of this group would be increased from 8 to 12 years. Annual repairs would be changed to repairs performed every 2 years. Medium repairs would be performed every 4 years.

The second group would include four-axle cars with non-cast trucks. Annual repairs would continue, capital repairs would be performed every 12 years, and medium repairs every 4 years. This group is temporary; once cast trucks replace the older models, the group will be eliminated.

The third group would include two-axle and four-axle wooden body refrigerator cars with center sills. The present periods of service between capital, medium, and annual repairs would remain unchanged, but capital repairs and medium repairs would be performed at car repair plants rather than at car repair yards.

The fourth group would include the old type cars without center sills; cars in this group would continue to be repaired under the present system. Annual repairs would be made if the condition of the car so required.

The last, or fifth, group would include cars which do not see much service. Annual repairs on cars of this group would be changed to repairs performed every 2 years, medium repairs would be performed every 8 years, and capital repairs when necessary.

At present, the plants are required to repair only four-axle cars. Since the present period of service between capital repairs on four-axle cars is 8 years, the plants repair one-eighth of the four-axle cars each year, or 12.5 percent.

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Under the suggested system, the period of service between capital repairs would be increased from 8 to 12 years, and the plants would be repairing one-twelfth of the four-axle cars each year, or 8.3 percent, which would be 33.6 percent fewer four-axle cars than now. The time saved under the suggested system could be used to repair two-axle cars and the old type rolling stock.

The suggested system would relieve the car yards from performing capital repairs and would make it possible for them to concentrate on current repairs.

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